

FROM BURNSIDE'S ARMY CORPS.

A Dash Down the Rappahannock—Capture of Rebel Recruits from Maryland—The Track of an Underground Railroad Discovered—Confederate Cargoes from Maryland—An Army and Navy Exploit.

From Our Special Correspondent.

CAMP NEAR FREDERICKSBURG, VA., Aug. 17, 1862.

A little expedition down the Rappahannock, planned by Gen. Burnside with more of hope than expectation of its success, has resulted very advantageously for the Union cause. It has long been known that regular and rapid communication was had between the disloyal in Northern States and the Rebel forces. In spite of a blockaded coast, arms and warlike munitions and articles of various kinds, have been passed through our lines ever since the war broke out. The newspapers of New-York are sometimes on file in Richmond 48 hours after their publication, and the mail communication between the two points is not so slow nor so uncertain as it was thirty years ago, when every avenue lay open. It would, perhaps, be impossible to close all the gates through which these things are carried, but if certain principal points are discovered and guarded, the minor outlets may be overlooked with comparative safety.

Maryland, herself half disloyal, lies next to Virginia, and is in the direct line of travel from the Northern to the Southern seaboard; and the extent of her water courses, and the nature of the country, point to that quarter as the most favorable for the place of the contrabandists.

A reference to the map will show the reader that a natural overland route from the Western Shore country of Maryland to the Rebel capital would be by way of Matthes Point and Port Royal (Va.) to Bowling Green, by stage, and thence by rail. This whole district of country is disloyal, and in the hands of the Rebel military forces. With the exception of the Rappahannock, which is not more than a quarter of a mile wide at Port Royal Ferry, and which flows with a rather sluggish current, there are no rivers to cross, and passenger cars or goods would have to be reshipped but once until the railroad was reached. That this route was taken by the Secessionists, to some extent, was known, but, although our gunboats had ascended the Rappahannock to Fredericksburg, no very precise estimate had been formed of its amount by our commanding General.

Circumstances which recently transpired called particular attention to the matter, and the offer of Acting-Master Nelson Provost of the Anaconda, to take a party and reconnoiter the position was accepted. Accordingly, at daylight yesterday morning, a detachment of 25 men from Co. K, 9th N. Y. Vol. (Hawkins' Zouaves), in charge of Lieut. G. H. Herbert, was sent on board the small steamboat Cooper's Point, to report to Capt. Provost. The two brass howitzers belonging to the Company, with abundant supplies of ammunition, were also put on board. Six of the crew of the Anaconda accompanied the Captain, and the party was completed with the addition of Lieut. Palmer of the Signal Corps, Mr. Hunt, Mr. Wells, and myself.

The morning was wet, and appearances promised anything but a pleasant trip, but at an early hour the clouds broke, and the day was as bright and sunshiny as we could have desired. The river banks for a dozen miles below Fredericksburg are steep, rising abruptly sometimes to a height of 30 or 40 feet. A dense forest growth of timber covers the slopes and crowns the summit, while over the trees run creeping vines and parasites, often covering their branches and foliage now sight, and hanging in thick festoons over the red waters of the river. Here and there we saw perched on the rotten trunk of an old tree a crow or buzzard; little else whirled along the shores and oars, or twice the side of our steamboat which swayed up a shock of wild swans. At long intervals we came upon herds of cattle standing half-deep in the water, or browsing on marshy, uneven bottoms; and still more rarely horses and mules could be seen on upland pasture or down the water to drink.

Six miles below Fredericksburg there is a pottery attemt at a river to last, some half dozen or more old schooners having been sunk, to no purpose. On the right bank are the ruins of a Rebel battery, which mounted one 3-pounder howitzer, of the same class as those in the Sewall's Point, Potomac, and North Carolina river defenses.

Where, indeed, do we not encounter these caravans? The party stopped, and a parley ensued. A伦chenmeyer represented himself as a Rebel officer, and explained his Yankee uniform by saying it was a "organic." The party told him they were recruits for the Southern army from Maryland, and were delighted to see him.

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